

### ***Former NASS President Cautions Subcommittee on Elections Against Additional Federal Mandates and Emphasizes Need for State Flexibility to Administer Elections*** □ □ □

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**WASHINGTON** - Today, the former President of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, warned members of the Subcommittee on Elections about the consequences of increasing federal control over elections.

At today's hearing on uniformity of election standards, the Kansas Secretary of State reflected on the electoral successes and failures after the 2002 enactment of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). Thornburgh - who was President of NASS during the inception of HAVA - noted that certain state election procedures benefited from the "broad objectives" included in HAVA, and others greatly suffered as a result of HAVA provisions that required federal control.

According to Thornburgh, HAVA's largest failure was its requirement that federal agencies accredit voting technologies utilized by states - a process that took nearly seven years to even begin functioning. "That process has proved to be slow, cumbersome and expensive," Thornburgh notes in his testimony. "In this most notable instance, HAVA provided for complete federal control, and the result was failure."

After today's hearing, the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, **Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.**, expressed the importance of providing federal incentives versus mandates. "While the intention behind Congressional mandates dictating election procedures has been to improve the process,

we must recognize that some have had negative effects," McCarthy noted. "In order for states to maintain their diversity - one of the greatest strengths of this nation - Congress must provide incentives that retain states' ability to administer elections in ways that accommodate their specific, unique needs."

"While we have seen some improvements in the electoral process, in some states the Help America Vote Act has made it more difficult for election officials to make improvements on their own," added Subcommittee member **Rep. Gregg Harper, R-Miss.** "Many states have shown that they can achieve greater success when they are allowed to be innovative when implementing uniform election standards to address state needs."

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.